



Dana E. Blackwell  
Executive Director

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

**COMMISSIONERS:**  
CAROL O. BIONDI, VICE-CHAIR  
PATRICIA CURRY  
Hon. JOYCE FAHEY  
BRENDA GALLOWAY  
LILY GRIEGO  
PHALEN G. HUREWITZ, Esq.  
HELEN A. KLEINBERG  
DAISY MA  
CHRISTINA S. MATTINGLY  
DR. LA-DORIS MCCLANEY  
SANDRA RUDNICK  
ADELINA SORKIN, LCSW/ACSW  
REVEREND G. LIND TAYLOR  
DR. HARRIETTE WILLIAMS, CHAIR

### APPROVED MINUTES

---

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **November 3, 2003**, in room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim transcription of events at this meeting.**

#### COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Carol O. Biondi  
Patricia Curry  
Joyce Fahey  
Brenda Galloway  
Phalen G. Hurewitz  
Helen Kleinberg  
Daisy Ma  
Christina S. Mattingly  
Sandra Rudnick  
Nina Sorkin  
Dr. Harriette Williams

#### COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused)

Lily Griego  
Dr. La-Doris McClaney  
Rev. G. Lind Taylor

#### APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda for the November 3, 2003 meeting was unanimously approved.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes for the September 22, 2003 general meeting were unanimously approved.

## **APPRECIATION DAY**

On behalf of the Commission, Chair Williams extended a warm appreciation to Susan Jakubowski for her dedication, professionalism, and support while she served as the Department's liaison to the Commission.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Dr. Sanders stated that Dr. Michael Olenick resigned from his position as Division Chief of Emancipation. Dr. Sanders indicated that the Department is in the process of identifying an acting position and an open search will take place to fill the position. He added that the emancipation division will return to the Department from the auspices of the CAO's office.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

- Chair Williams acknowledged Dr. Olenick's contributions to the Department.
- Chair Williams reported that the Commission's holiday luncheon will take place on December 15<sup>th</sup>, in lieu of the previously scheduled Commission meeting and will be chaired by Commissioner Ma.
- Chair Williams reported that the idea of celebrating the Commission's upcoming 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary was discussed at the retreat. She suggested that this celebration take place in conjunction with the Department.
- Chair Williams attended the ACHSA luncheon at which David Janssen and five youth were presented awards.
- Chair Williams attended the education meeting held on October 29<sup>th</sup> in response to the Board of Supervisors August 29, 2003 motion. Chair Williams found the meeting to be a collaborative and effective effort with much buy-in from those agencies present.
- Chair Williams indicated that the Joint Commission Meeting was very well attended and that the time spent discussing the Little Hoover Commission's recommendations was worthwhile.
- Chair Williams acknowledged the efforts of those Commissioners who attended the Commission's retreat and the need to make those Commissioners who weren't in attendance aware of the agreed upon direction of the Commission prior to the report back at the November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Chair Williams indicated that she received the UCLA Black Alumni Arthur Ashe Community Service Award on October 16<sup>th</sup>. She stated that her participation on the Commission was in part the basis for her receipt of the award.
- Chair Williams stated that committee assignments will be finalized by November 17<sup>th</sup>. She reminded Commissioners to fill out the interest form before that time.
- Chair Williams indicated that she received a news release from the Children's Bureau Express regarding federal action on increased adoptions for children in foster care. Dr. Sanders indicated that the federal government is looking to weigh the adoption incentive bonus for the adoption of older youth.
- Commissioner Sorkin reported on her attendance at two conferences:
  - The Rose Jenkins Conference focused on outcomes for the population being served. She suggested that the Commission consider a presentation

by the Department on the integration of System of Care and Wraparound in Los Angeles County.

- The Latino Behavioral Health Institute Annual Conference. Commissioner Sorkin reported that during his keynote speech, Dr. Sanders stated that 42% of children in the Department's care are Latino and that 52% of the calls coming to the Hotline are for Latino families. The importance of cultural competency as being integral to the professionalism provided to individuals and families was an issue raised at the conference. Commissioner Sorkin also attended two workshops at the conference. The first workshop, Structured Decision Making (SDM). This assessment provides consistency in determining safety and risk. Training in SDM is just now taking place in the Department's regions. The second workshop addressed relative care.
- Commissioner Kleinberg thanked the Children's Law Center (CLC) for their efforts toward bringing more attention to the issue of education for foster youth. As a result of the CLC's Education Summit, a recommendation was developed that suggested an Education Council be created to examine these issues. The Board of Supervisors passed a motion to examine the feasibility of such a council as well as the development of an education unit in both DCFS and the Probation Department. The meeting attended by Chair Williams was convened to discuss a "blueprint" for creating services across agencies, departments, and systems. Commissioner Kleinberg is representing the Commission in this effort. Commissioner Kleinberg added that efforts toward completing the contract between the Department and LAUSD are continuing.
- Commissioner Curry announced that the last Emancipation Committee meeting will take place on November 17<sup>th</sup>. The Emancipation Partnership will then continue to work toward improving the emancipation system. The Partnership will include key stakeholders. Trish Curry and Vice Chair Biondi will represent the Commission. Quarterly forums will be held throughout the communities to receive input from and to inform community agencies. Commissioner Curry will continue to keep the Commission informed about the ongoing efforts in this area. Commissioner Sorkin raised the issue that emancipation services are not reaching KinGAP families. Commissioner Curry agreed that there are many unresolved issues in the Emancipation Program and stated that the Partnership will continue to work toward program improvements.

Chair Williams acknowledged and thanked Commissioner Curry for her dedication, successful and outstanding efforts toward the improvement of the emancipation program and the positive impact this has had on emancipating youth.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

CWS Redesign Community Forums: Linda Lewis stated that the CWS Redesign (Redesign) is a very comprehensive approach toward reformulating the child welfare system in California. Los Angeles is an “early implementer” of the Redesign. She explained that the Department charged her with the task of creating forums in each of the SPAs to include the various communities in the discussion about the County’s commitment to the Redesign. The forums also allowed for identification of specific programmatic approaches that are tied to the Redesign, and specific to the needs of the various SPAs.

Ms. Lewis stated that she was most interested in defining the idea of partnership within the child welfare system, as this is a key aspect of the Redesign. She explained that while the Department has the responsibility for child protection, communities also share in that responsibility. To that end, one of the many recommendations of the Redesign is the implementation of a differential response approach that promotes the role of community agencies providing prevention services that would assist children staying safely in their homes without the intervention of the Department. The success of this approach would depend on the development of a network of services available to families. Ms. Lewis emphasized the role of the community as integral to the Redesign’s strategy.

Ms. Lewis stated that the Redesign is a strategic approach to reaching the goals of California’s Program Improvement Plan, and SB636. The comprehensive nature of the Redesign is important, as legislative changes will be necessary to implementing the programs needed to reach the goals of these complimentary initiatives.

She stated that the general conversation about the Redesign has been about preventing children from entering the child welfare system, however, discussion has also taken place about intervention efforts aimed at those children and families that are already in the system. This led to recommendations that specifically address the need for a strong emancipation program and the creation of life long relationships for those children/youth who are emancipating from the system.

Ms. Lewis acknowledged that this is not a panacea for all that ails the child welfare system; rather it is a road map that can improve the system and a way to begin thinking differently and consistently about child welfare. She expressed her belief that the Department and the State are committed to implement the strategies and recommendations laid out in the Redesign.

Commissioner Kleinberg asked if implementation would take place in each SPA and whether each SPA would look different depending on their needs? Dr. Sanders explained that the goal for each SPA is the same and that the Department’s leadership in each SPA is connected to the communities in a way that is recommended in the Redesign. John

Oppenheim commented that through the Department's work with the Foundation Consortium, the Department is committed to improving managers' skills relative to community relations. The Department is also working with Casey Family Programs to begin developing plans for each SPA. He added that the many initiatives that the Department is undertaking will add to the success of connecting families to community resources in a way that prevents their involvement with the Department. Ms. Lewis added that there are public sector resources that should be involved in this partnership. Commissioner Kleinberg expressed her concern that historically the Department has not worked well with community agencies and suggested that conversations need to take place with the private sector to rebuild relationships. Commissioner Hurewitz suggested that a partnership with First 5 LA is important with respect to the organizations Warm Line initiative and others that are designed to engage communities.

In response to a question from Chair Williams, the Redesign is focused on "families for children, not placements for children". Therefore, it will be critical for FFAs and group homes to reexamine their role in the child welfare system. Chair Williams stated that this sentiment was expressed at the recent ACHSA luncheon she attended and emphasized the role of foster families in relation to permanency for children and youth.

Los Angeles County IV-E Waiver: Dr. Sanders stated that the intent for seeking the Title IV-E waiver from the state and federal government is to allow the Department the flexibility to allocate funds to develop up-front preventative services to children and families and improve outcomes for children who are already under the Department's care.

Joan Smith, Deputy Director, explained that traditionally Los Angeles County has provided services based on funding eligibility, which often times is not in line with the needs of children and families. The waiver is seeking a cost neutral formula, which could be achieved through a monthly allocation. These funds would be used whether or not the child is removed from the home. She explained that the Department has been forced to remove children from the home to receive funding to service the family. The waiver would allow for flexibility to use the funds to provide services based on each family's individual needs to ensure that children remain safely in their family of origin.

Ms. Smith explained the desired outcomes the Department would demonstrate through the ability of having flexibility to use the funds. The demonstration will include an evaluation of the impact that funding flexibility has on safety and permanency outcomes. The demonstration could be examined by evaluating pre and post waiver outcomes or the establishment of an out of county control group with Los Angeles serving as the experimental group. The Department believes that the second option is viable.

Ms. Smith indicated that the waiver concept has been presented to the Child Deputies and that the next step is to get support from the Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Curry put forward a motion that would give the Chair, Vice Chair and Executive Director the authority to send a letter to the Board detailing the Commission's support of the Department's efforts. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

Commissioner Kleinberg asked whether training funds were included in Title IV-E. Mr. Oppenheim stated that those dollars are funded separately.

In response to Commissioner Hurewitz, Dr. Sanders explained that the waiver is different from a block grant in that it allows for negotiation of the amount of money to be received from the federal government. Commissioner Curry added that it also allows for a reinvestment of funds. She emphasized the importance of the flexibility aspect of the waiver as the Department would then be able to develop and provide up-front programs.

Commissioner Kleinberg asked what type of accountability will be in place to evaluate whether the Department has been successful. Mr. Oppenheim explained that the negotiation will include both funding and evaluation as this waiver will serve as a test to the federal government relative to the success of this approach.

Chair Williams asked Dr. Sanders to clearly define prevention with respect to where the child is in the system. Dr. Sanders stated that he defines prevention as pre-court and pre-department involvement. Commissioner Fahey asked Dr. Sanders whether prevention also applies to youth currently in the foster system to prevent long term out of home placement and expressed concern that the Department's focus may be ignoring this population. Dr. Sanders expressed the Department's concern and on-going commitment to youth presently in the system.

With no further questions, Chair Williams thanked the Department for their presentation.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- David Cantu: Lauded Dr. Sanders for the work and progress he has made during his time as the Department's Director.
- Miriam Corrigan: Passed on her request for public comment.
- Merritt Holloway: Requested that there be an end to all adoptions and that the Department is forced to close and stop serving families.
- Yvonne Michelle Autry: Testified that the Department's emphasis should be on family reunification
- Monika Sanders: Requested that Dr. Sanders reconsider the redeployment of the Department's permanency placement liaisons, as she believes that they have increased the timeliness of permanency for children in the Department's care.
- Korliss Robinson: Requested that Dr. Sanders reconsider the redeployment of the Department's permanency placement liaisons, as she believes that they have increased the timeliness of permanency for children in the Department's care.

- Cindy Hathaway: Requested that Dr. Sanders reconsider the redeployment of the Department's permanency placement liaisons, as she believes that they have increased the timeliness of permanency for children in the Department's care.

**MEETING ADJOURNED**